

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted at [rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 337. Note that Roddy also broadcasts a simplified version – An Litir Bheag – on Monday evenings at 7.00 pm. This is also available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 33 corresponds to Litir 337.*

Chuir Tormod MacLeòid roimhe gluasad gu Astràilia. Bha cuid anns a’ choimhearsnachd timcheall air Baile Anna ann an Eilean Cheap Bhreatainn mì-chinnteach mu dheidhinn. Bha Astràilia fad air falbh. Ach bha feadhainn eile dhen bheachd gum b’ e Astràilia an t-aon àite a chumadh a’ choimhearsnachd ri chèile. Mura falbhadh iad uile còmhla, bhiodh cuid a’ falbh leotha fhèin, **mean air mhean**, gu beatha ùr ann an Canada no anns Na Stàitean Aonaichte.

Bha dithis deònach togail luinge a mhaoineachadh. B’ iad Iain Friseal, a bhuineadh do dh’Alba Nuadh agus Iain MacAoidh, a rugadh ann an Alba. Chuireadh druim na luinge sìos faisg air eaglais Thormoid, agus thòisich an obair-togail. B’ iad an dithis a bha os cionn a’ phròiseict Niall agus Ruairidh MacGriogair. ’S e luchd-togail bhàtaichean a bh’ annta le chèile. Chaidh an soitheach ainmeachadh am *Margaret*. Bha sin às dèidh nighean aig Tormod MacLeòid.

Chaidh dàrna bàta a thogail cuideachd – an *Highland Lass*. Chaidh an obair-togail a chrìochnachadh ach cha robh airgead ann airson siùil no sgòdan a cheannach. Bha taigh is fearann Thormoid air a bhith air a’ mhargaidh airson bliadhna agus, fhathast, cha robh duine ann a bha deònach an ceannach. Mura faigheadh a’ choimhearsnachd an t-airgead sin, cha bhiodh comas aca seòladh gu Astràilia.

Bhiodh iad ag ùrnaigh còmhla gu tric. Thuir Tormod gun tigeadh an t-airgead tro ùrnaigh. Bha e deimhinne à freastal Dhè. As t-earrach thàinig fear leis an airgead agus cheannaich e taigh is fearann Thormoid. Bha an t-airgead aca mu dheireadh thall, agus cheannaich iad na siùil is na sgòdan a bha a dhìth orra.

Bha Margaret, no Mairead, NicLeòid, nighean Thormoid, a-nise fichead ’s a dhà bliadhna a dh’aois. As t-fhoghar ochd ceud deug is leth-cheud (1850) thàinig long a-steach a phort Bhaile Anna airson fiodh a thogail. Bha i a-mach à Obar Dheathain ann an Alba. Ach thàinig an reothadh tràth sa bhliadhna sin. Cha d’ fhuair an long a-mach às a’ bhàgh a-rithist air sàilleabh deigh. Bha an caiptean is an criutha gu bhith ann fad a’ gheamhraidh.

Am measg na bh’ air bòrd, bha fear òg à Obar Dheathain, Ùisdean MacAnndrais. Ghabh e fhèin is Mairead NicLeòid gaol air a chèile. ’S e an duilgheadas a bh’ ann gu robh Mairead a’ dèanamh deiseil airson falbh a dh’Astràilia. Tha e coltach gu robh iad airson pòsadh ach bha iad dhen bheachd nach toireadh Tormod cead dhaibh. Cha bhiodh e airson ’s gum falbhadh a nighean a dh’Obar Dheathain, agus e fhèin is càch a’ gluasad gu Astràilia.

Nuair a bha an deigh a’ tòiseachadh air tanachadh, chaidh Ùisdean à fianais. Rinn an criutha, agus muinntir an àite, rannsachadh mòr air a shon. Cha robh sgeul air. Mu dheireadh, bhris an deigh, agus b’ fheudar don t-soitheach tilleadh a dh’Obar Dheathain.

Nuair a thill iad a dh'Alba, dh'innis an caiptean an droch naidheachd do phàrantan Ùisdein. Bha e a' smaoinichadh gu robh an gille air tuiteam tron deigh agus gu robh e marbh.

Ach chan ann mar sin a bha e. Le taic bho Mhairead agus caraid no dhà aice, **bha Ùisdean air a bhith am falach ann am bothan**. Bha feadhainn a' toirt biadh dha gun fhiosta do chàch. Nuair a bha an soitheach Albannach beagan làithean aig muir, nochd Ùisdean a-rithist. Fhuair e obair air bòrd an t-soithich a bha a' dol a dhol a dh'Astràilia. Agus, dà bhliadhna às dèidh sin, phòs e fhèin is Mairead aig ceann thall an t-saoghail.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** mì-chinnteach: *uncertain*; Ùisdean MacAnndrais: *Hugh Anderson*; Obar Dheathain: *Aberdeen*; càch: *the others*; tanachadh: *thinning*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** chuir Tormod MacLeòid roimhe gluasad gu Astràilia: *Norman MacLeod decided to move to Australia*; an t-aon àite a chumadh a' choimhearsnachd ri chèile: *the one place that would keep the community together*; bhiodh cuid a' falbh leotha fhèin: *some would leave by themselves*; bha dithis deònach togail luinge a mhaoinichadh: *two people were willing to finance the building of a ship*; druim na luinge: *the keel of the ship*; 's e luchd-togail bhàtaichean a bh' annta le chèile: *they were both boatbuilders*; chaidh an obair-togail a chrìochnachadh: *the building work was finished*; airson siùil no sgòdan a cheannach: *to buy sails or sheets (ropes)*; air a' mhargaidh airson bliadhna: *on the market for a year*; a bha deònach an ceannach: *who was willing to buy them*; gun tigeadh an t-airgead tro ùrnaigh: *that the money would come through prayer*; bha e deimhinne à freastal Dhè: *he was certain of God's providence*; thàinig long airson fiodh a thogail: *a ship came to pick up timber*; thàinig an reothadh tràth: *the freeze came early*; air sàilleabh deigh: *because of ice*; ghabh X is Y gaol air a chèile: *X and Y fell in love*; bha iad dhen bheachd nach toireadh Tormod cead dhaibh: *they were of the opinion that Norman would not give them [his] consent*; chaidh Ùisdean à fianais: *Hugh disappeared*; rannsachadh mòr air a shon: *a great search for him*; gu robh e air tuiteam tron deigh: *that he had fallen through the ice*; gun fhiosta do chàch: *without the others knowing*; aig ceann thall an t-saoghail: *at the other end of the world*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **bha Ùisdean air a bhith am falach ann am bothan:** *Hugh had been hiding in a bothy. Are you wondering what the status of falach is here and why I didn't say "air fhalach"? Well, I could have done, and it would have meant the same. The verb falaich ("hide, conceal") has two verbal noun forms, a' falach and a' falachadh. So we could say tha mi air m' fhalach (lit. "I am after my hiding" ie I am hidden) or tha e air fhalach (he is hidden) or tha i air a falach (she is hidden). The verb here is in a passive form. But falach is also a noun, meaning "hiding, concealment" and it is in this form that it appears in the Litir. Am falach (used with all persons) means "in concealment" or "hidden" eg tha mi am falach (I am hidden), tha i am falach (she is hidden).*

**Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach:** mean air mhean: *little by little*.

\* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig